

# How HENRY FORD is regarded in Brazil.

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Articles by MONTEIRO LOBATO,  
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## Henry Ford.

WHEN some day in the future another Carlyle re-writes "Heroes and Hero-Worship", by the side of Moses, of Cromwell, of Odin will stand Henry Ford, the Hero of Work. For if there is in this world a Hero of work, a revealer of the possibilities of work as a remedy for all the ills that no work, bad work and the iniquitous organization of work have created, that man is Henry Ford. A great man of the heroic Carlylian type who is not just a glorified clothes-rack hung for the moment with the glittering insignia of fame (in most cases La Fontaine's "L'Ane portant les Reliques") but a man who effects or sows the good seed of beneficent social transformations. One was Louis XIV, called the "Great"; but another was Gutenberg, the Greater.

And who is there in the modern world besides Henry Ford fecundating human progress with the pollen that will make to-morrow better than to-day and yesterday?

Henry Ford's worth does not lie in the fact that he is the richest man of all time ; this would only



make him a heavier sack than other full sacks. His value lies in his being the most lucid and penetrating intellect of modern times placed at the service of the noblest of all causes : THE SUPPRESSION OF HUMAN MISERY.

So far the solvers of social problems have been merely Utopian idealists after the fashion of Rousseau or Marx — of those dreamers who dream theoretical solutions, far too pretty to be sound. Ford does not dream solutions. He deduces them. He takes Man as he is, accepts the world as he finds it, experiments and lets the facts bring to the surface the logically correct, natural and human solution. His idealism is organic. His ideas do not spring up "a priori", born of mental or sentimental transports. They simply reflect the answers given by consulted facts. Hence the enormous import of his ideas, the repercussion they are beginning to have and the profound influence they must necessarily exercise on the future order of things.

Henry Ford is to be regarded therefore not as the biggest money-bag that ever was but as the foremost example of clearness of vision in our day and generation.

Henry Ford, a farmer's son, saw the light of day in 1863 in Dearborn, Michigan. He was a born mechanic and never put the fallacious study of books before the direct study of things as they are. He was self-taught, and to this he owes in great part his



victory. Stuff your brain with the dead lore of books and you will never be able to see, as you should, the life-current in human things. He looked through his own eyes, thought with his own brain, fashioned with his own hands.

While still a boy his spirit rebelled against primitive methods of agriculture, the traditional routine way of doing everything by dint of muscle, human or bovine. And he conceived the idea of transferring to steel the heavy task that burdened flesh. This thought was ever present in his mind but before working out its development he was led by circumstances to make a digression. He stored away inside his brain the idea of the machine that was to set agriculture free from the shackles of ancient custom and gave himself up body and soul to the intermediate industry of a runabout car for universal use.

Years and years were spent in the work of creating the type of car that corresponded to his idea, until one day he had it as he had pictured it. Only then, with the article actually completed, did he set about manufacturing it.

In 1896 he organized his company on a very modest basis, starting with only \$28,000 cash. Ford directed it in his own way — the fruit of a wide range of observation — never copying what he saw being done round and about him.



He was thought to be crazy and was looked down upon by the magnates of the day. But Ford threw himself into the realization of his scheme with such whole-heartedness and intelligence that the positions were gradually reversed and some twenty odd years later he it was who was looking down on the magnates and severely condemning the monstrous processes that had enriched them.

Ford had created the world's biggest industry!

Great credit indeed would be due to Henry Ford for the simple fact of his having created a business of such enormous proportions, but if the matter went no further his value would be limited to that of just another rich man, a modern Croesus. Ford, however, goes far beyond that. He maps out a future state of things more efficient and just than the present. Making donations? Endowing schools, libraries, hospitals? No. TEACHING HOW TO WORK, proving that work is the supreme good and demonstrating the incommensurable significance of the word INDUSTRY.

Industry is not, as used to be thought, an empirical means of making money ; it is a scientific way of transforming the natural resources of the earth into utilities for general service and general profit. The end in view is not to make money ; it is the common welfare, and the practical means of achieving this lies in the constant perfecting of labor methods, hand in hand with a rigorous distribution



of profits to all the partners in the undertaking. These partners are three in number : the consumer, who receives his share of profit in the form of products tending always to be better and cheaper ; the workman, who receives his part in the form of wages on a steadily increasing scale ; the owner, who receives a fair dividend on his capital.

This conception, realized in Ford's business with the most surprising results, breaks with tradition and exposes the deadly disease at the root of modern industry : an alliance of three in which one associate, the owner, receives not only his rightful profit but also the part that belongs to the workman and the consumer.

On the Henry Ford basis industry ceases to be the devouring Moloch of millions of creatures for the benefit of a group of nabobs and is transformed into an inexhaustible cornucopia of good things. The sinister antagonism between capital and labor which threatens to subvert the world is extinguished, production is adjusted to demand and, following on proper distribution, the hideous cancer of human misery disappears.

It is possible that the "social question" may not be solved just yet with Henry Ford's ideas : Man is stupid and blind. It is possible that Communism, a solution in theory only, may yet extend to the rest of the world the experiment it has initiated in Russia. This will but serve to retard the only cor-



rect solution — the only one based on indestructible realities — the solution of Henry Ford.

No conscientious man reading "My Life and Work", Henry Ford's great book, can fail to discern in it the Messianic Gospel of the Future. It is the Gospel of Common Sense, of Reason, of Mind that never wavers but penetrates into the heart of things as a steel drill penetrates granite. In this book Ford gathers within one focus of light all the profound conclusions of his study of the realities. This healing light, clear as the sun, dispels the darkness. Human misery is only a consequence of darkness.

For Brazil there is no literature or study more fruitful than Henry Ford's book. Everything has yet to be done — and what immense profit will be ours if we begin with the lesson taught by the bearer of the new Glad Tidings?



## Crust And Crust-Breaker.

THE force that Henry Ford is beginning to exercise in the world is already formidable. As a start, he contributed materially to bring about the revolution that has taken place in transport. In a world where everything boils down finally to a matter of transport (what is this article but the transportation of ideas from one brain to another?) any improvement in the means thereof affects the existing order of things profoundly.

Ford, however, did not stop at this, grand enough as it was, but threw out a handful of ideas so lucid, so electrifying, so axiomatic that his moral influence will certainly surpass his material achievements.

What element is this that gives Henry Ford's ideas a strange tang of newness? Simply the element of good sense. There is naught in them but this : Good Sense. Now, for a world that suffers keenly from the pangs of folly, that groans in the convulsions of despair and here and there heaves in partial revolt, what more pertinent remedy than a strong injection of good sense?



Good sense is implanted in the bosom of all human beings and that is why we call it Common Sense. But this treasure that we all possess is, like bottles of old wine, covered with a thick crust of fixed ideas — successive coats of dust as it were — and traditional errors perpetuated by routine as well as fantasies arising from the seduction that the sirens of Utopian ideology have always exercised over us. This crust overlays our innate good sense, dulls it, chokes it, leaves it like a brilliant embedded in a coating of clay. If, however, a shock breaks the clay crust, the brilliant glistens, good sense peeps out serene and fit.

Henry Ford is a kind of shatterer of the crusts that form over our inborn good sense. Whoever reads Ford feels the deposit of error that hinders a correct view of things crack within him, crumble and vanish — and that is why when we read him we find ourselves punctuating the whole series of his conclusions with “That’s perfectly true ! He’s right !”

And so far have we wandered off the track as a rule that at our first contact with Henry Ford we feel inclined to classify him among the “contradictory cusses”, running, as he does, so contrary to the prevailing ideas not only in purely industrial matters but also in matters of social organization. The next thing is we have retracted and admitted that he is quite right because can there be a clearer proof of



the inherent vice in almost all our accepted ideas than the horrible mess to be seen in a world governed thereby? Had they been correct, had they been just, we should not now be struggling in the sea of problems conventionally termed the "social question". If a man has fever, if he is delirious, it is a sure sign that he is seriously ill internally. To stamp out these bodily symptoms of fever is as foolish a procedure as stamping out social fever (revolutions, strikes, etc.) by drastic measures. The thing to do is to discover and remove the cause of the fever, the cause of the convulsion.

What is a revolution? A revolution is nothing more than the upsetting of a state of balance too uncomfortable to be maintained any longer. Madened by despair, the people let go and flounder in a sea of blood, struggling wildly to find a new standing-ground more tenable than the previous one.

Because the collar-button won't go into the hole of the collar, says Ford, they tear the shirt and collar to pieces : the only correct solution, **WIDEN THE HOLE**, never occurs to them.

Ford is not a reformer and still less a reactionary ; he is an **ADJUSTER**. He accepts the world as it is and man as he finds him. He merely corrects faults of adjustment, the evident cause of all ills. In his own field of action he demonstrates this to be so — demonstrates that modern industry, on a salary basis, without the reform or destruction of a single



thing, can be made into an ideal system for obtaining maximum production with maximum benefits for the three partners — owner, workman and consumer — if organized in accordance with the dictates of common sense. He showed what prodigious results schools can yield if run on similar lines. He demonstrated the same thing in regard to poorhouses and hospitals.

Ford impresses us as a new Pasteur, a sage of a modern type who does not commit himself to any idea, however simple, before the most rigorous tests have sanctioned it. Instead, however, of operating on a small scale, on inanimate things or "*in anima vili*", Ford operates on a grand scale in the great laboratory Society with the abundant material Man. Only after experimenting does he draw conclusions and make assertions. His immense factory may well be called an Experimental Station. For the first time in the history of the world experiments are being made in respect of wages, selling prices, cost prices and the real meaning of the words "money", "industry", "profits", etc. with that scientific rectitude and meticulousness with which an analyst studies in a laboratory the biology of an insect, the structure of organic tissue, the catalytic action of a metalloid in the presence of another. And, inasmuch as in laboratories the message of microscope, scales, chemical reactions, electrolysis, etc., seldom confirms the fixed ideas that routine



bears along from the past, so physical science only came into being in this world when the day of experimenting dawned. Prior to this, sheer purblind quackery.

There will only be science in sociology, commerce, industry, and finance when we abandon quackery, chance, luck, fate, feeling in the dark, scenting things out, divine providence, the personal element — all phantasmagoria and blind groping — and when in those domains penetrates the experimental method already victorious in the domain of physical science.

Henry Ford is the Bacon of industry, or rather, of sociology. He proclaims experimenting to be the only method and he uses it like a genius. The conclusions at which he arrives shock, injure, disfigure, contradict, demolish, condemn almost all fixed notions. But what is absolutely novel in Henry Ford is his method of solution, which is contrary to ideological reform and contrary to any harking back to the past. He bases his solutions on one thing only and shows that it is another case of the egg of Columbus, the simplest, the most logical, the clearest, the most intuitive, the most sensible thing out, to wit : READJUSTMENT.

Won't the button go into the hole? Well, it is not necessary to destroy the shirt or buy a new collar, as the Utopian idealists (Communists, Bolsheviks, Socialists, etc.) would have it. Nor is it necessary



to exchange the shirt and collar for an old shirt and an old-fashioned collar, as the reactionaries would have it. It is sufficient to do what common sense counsels ; widen the hole or reduce the size of the stud. Bring about, in short, a readjustment. There will be a saving in time and worry and the selfsame object aimed at by reformer and reactionary alike will be attained, namely, the getting of a shirt and a collar that will not annoy us, thanks to the good fit and the ease of manipulation.

If brains governed, Henry Ford's book would have already been made obligatory reading in schools, factories, parliament, universities, academies, hospitals, prisons, charitable institutions, every place where a nucleus of teachable adults or children are gathered together.

And what miracles would not have already been wrought by this scale compound, this solvent of the thick crust of error that veils the refulgence of the mind and cramps the will-power and energy of the human race?



## New Ideas.

**W**HY charity? asks Henry Ford in his wonderful book, the Bible of the future.

Why should charity have to be forever practised in this world?

And he supplies the answer himself : BECAUSE IT IS EASIER TO GIVE THAN TO MAKE GIVING UNNECESSARY.

The charity that confines itself to giving and does not trouble about making giving unnecessary achieves merely this : THE UPKEEP OF HUMAN MISERY. And well it were if it did nothing more ! But it entails another evil — it actually blocks the way to the solution of the problem of human misery. The money, the energy, the intelligence spent in persistently following the wrong road, endowing charity with a semblance of organic form under the denomination of philanthropy, all this simply holds up to our gaze the mirage of a solution but nothing is solved at all. The real matter at issue, seen on the plane where Henry Ford's extraordinary insight has focussed it, is something differ-



ent, far nobler and far more rational. It is seen to be not alone a question of succouring misery but of suppressing it. Ford's idea is to make charity useless for lack of objects.

How many readers will smile at this ! How many will take this to be only one more of the countless Utopian visions that people the human brain !

That is because they don't know how Ford forms his ideas — they don't know that his idealistic faculty is a practical working organ. Ford's ideas are based on experiment — they represent what the possibilities have held out to him.

Absurd as this proposition may seem of suppressing charity by suppressing want, Ford demonstrated it in Detroit in the same way that Columbus solved the problem of the egg. And there is no reason why an experiment on a small scale should have different results when we make it on a larger scale. What he did can be done the wide world over ; the Detroit solution is universally applicable.

But what did he do?

He studied the primary causes of misery. He saw that these primary causes are incapacity for work and dislike for work. For the misery that supervenes because a man does not want to work there is a very simple remedy : let him starve. Whatever kind of beneficence seeks to take care of this class of idlers is criminally guilty because it justifies and rewards sloth. But there are those who cannot



work : the disabled and the sick. If they cannot work, how are they to live except on charity or beneficence?

It is here that Henry Ford makes the world a Great Revelation.

The legions of the unfit are not incapacitated for work; ~~for the~~ work, as we have organized it, is undaptable to them. Intelligent organization of industry, as effected by Ford in his own business, solves the problem perfectly.

Ford had a study made of all the tasks carried out in his factory and what each required of the artisan. He found that so many needed a normal man in good health, so many one arm only, so many no legs, so many not even eyesight, and so on. Then he rounded up the halt and lame of Detroit who were being supported by public charity and offered each one work suited to his physical condition. He did not do this out of charity, thereby burdening production. He did it to prove that a man of impaired physical capacity, given suitable work, can produce as much as a sound man, deserving therefore full pay. In this way he provided work in his factory for thousands of non-productive human beings who were a burden on the productive, leveling them up to normal efficiency, relieving society of so much dead weight and sparing the former the mortification of knowing themselves to be encumbrances.



Henry Ford would have his business an epitome of society in general. He wants a cross-section through the mass of his employees to reveal the same composition as would a cross-section through the mass of society. If in the latter we see the blind, the lame, the consumptive and all sorts of defectives ranged with the sound, the personnel of a properly organized industry should present a similar structure. And the day that it comes to pass, that day will society "ipso facto" be freed from its burden of dead weight and the problem of want will be solved by the suppression of unproductiveness.

The practical demonstration of this was so overwhelming that the idea is making headway and will conquer the world some day.

Complete victory over misery, however, will not depend on this alone but on other readjustments between industry and the general welfare of the community, the which Ford ably expounds in his book and which he has shown to be possible by carrying them out in his gigantic plant.

Pity it is that we in Brazil live stuck in a mire of last-century ideas, rancid and mouldy ideas translated from the French. In spite of the amazing advance of the United States, an advance that has placed them in the forefront of the modern world as the fashioners of Humanity's to-morrow, we here continue marking time, continue in our inveterate chewing of the cud. Camel-like, we ruminate



old theological ideas dating from the year 1000, from the days of the Plague, the period of Papal excommunication, etc. We pay no heed to the forward march of things — none at all to the forward march of ideas.

This Mr. Ford, for example, who in little more than twenty years rose from the position of workman to that of the greatest industrial magnate of all times — this man, whose industry alone produces double what the whole of Brazil produces, whence his greatness? From his ideas. From a few new ideas. From the conviction that the past has only one thing to offer us : LESSONS. From contempt for routine. From a personal examination of everything. From a central principle to which everything else is closely related, and that is : Work with Intelligence and Foresight.

It is books like his that should go from hand to hand among the people — whether man or master — instead of Escrich, Hebrew history, worm-eaten rubbish.

The world exists. Life is a reality. The brain is a force. The test is everything. But dry-rot, the Middle Ages, the fixed idea, the time-honoured fiction, the skull with Eucharist wafers instead of gray matter inside it — this is death, and death of the worst kind — that with which we fool ourselves, thinking it to be life.







## Ford and Germany.

THE process discovered by Henry Ford for reducing his factory costs to really absurd figures is apparently very singular. But only apparently, for if we think about it we shall see that it is the only feasible way.

The current practice in industry is to accept the cost price ; that means, to add at a given moment to the price of the raw material the cost of making it up. It seems quite logical — it seems even rigorously scientific — but it is not. Ford demonstrated that that only is certain which besides being logical is psychological. And he demonstrated this with facts, the only kind of demonstration he brings to his aid.

His system is not to accept the cost from the factory but to impose a cost on the factory. A certain product, we'll say, is turned out to-day for 100 dollars ; this cost is already exceptionally low and permits the fixing of the selling price at the level of the purchasing power of an enormous public. This would suffice and has sufficed every manufacturer



except Henry Ford, but then Ford is a pioneer of industry and not just a factory owner in business for the profit to be made out of it. He goes further and applies his revolutionary system. He rejects the 100-dollar price index and deliberately marks it down, say, to 80 dollars. It is evident that the factory would not be prepared at the moment to produce for that price. But it finds itself obliged to do so, for this is vital. Either produce at 80 or succumb. The instinct of self-preservation of the formidable organism that bears the name of the Ford Motor Company (an organism that surpasses in production an entire country, such as ours) is awakened ; every brain in it applies itself to the task of eliminating still further waste, of perfecting labour methods still more — and bit by bit the cost falls until it reaches the level demanded by the presiding genius. And hardly have things settled down at this level — the index of a certain moment of efficiency in the factory — when Ford determines once more a new basis — 70 dollars, for example — and so on consecutively. Thus he contrives to keep the minds of his men in a constant glow of research directed towards the common end in view, namely, to improve unceasingly, to make his business ever greater and more solid, to have it almost absurdly irresistible.

What does this mean but to acknowledge in practice what we all acknowledge in theory — THE OMNIPOTENCE OF MIND?



In point of fact, the human mind is the only agency with which the word "omnipotent" may be associated. Constrained by pressure from without, as in the case of Germany, or by pressure from within (the pressure of an ideal), as in the case of Mr. Ford, human intelligence performs the most astounding miracles ; left alone to itself in repose, it settles down into Oriental brooding.

The case of Germany is the mightiest evidence we have of mind working miracles under external pressure. The men who at Versailles devised fetters for Germany with the fiendishness of medieval inquisitors inventing tortures were only applying to a nation the method Ford applies in his factory in order to increase its efficiency. They were teaching Germany the only way to really attain her "uber alles". They were raising to the maximum point of productiveness the German constructive genius — the force unconquered in war, because Mind is invincible.

Clemenceau (still a tiger in an age of Fords) produced among the ingenuous offshoots of his old brain a scheme which sought to destroy German aviation by prohibiting the use of Diesel motors — motors which Germany had invented and perfected to the point of making aerial navigation possible. This design was a rank infantility : all the other nations were to have Diesel motors and fly ; the owner of the invention, forbidden to do likewise, would re-



main a spectator. He could look up and see the others flying, if he liked.

This pressure worked miracles. Intelligence is gas. If we compress it at the same time that we seal up all way of escape, it will make an outlet for itself.

That is what German genius did. It created a new motor, having nothing in common with the forbidden Diesel, and by means of this new engine has to-day surpassed its rivals.

Lina Hirsch, the virile woman journalist who keeps us here in touch with the evolution of Germany, writes in her last letter of the marvellous results of the high-pressure steam turbine, an engine which exceeds in efficiency and simplicity the prohibited motor. With this engine they can build a transatlantic aeroplane able to fly from Germany to the United States in one day, a distance that the Diesel (when still in German hands) covered — and it was considered a miracle — in two-and-a-half days.

From this simple example we see how ridiculous, how childish is the notion reactionaries entertain, imagining it to be possible to suffocate the human mind. They only obtain the opposite result : they double its efficiency and make it veritably omnipotent, thaumaturgic.

The miracles that Germany effects in all branches of industry have the same origin as the mira-



cles of Henry Ford. The sole difference is that Ford applies the principle of mind compression in a manner that is perfectly conscientious and acceptable to his employees. They suffer it gladly, convinced that the resultant improvement in methods will benefit them all.

In Germany the pressure is not willingly borne because it is of enemy origin and was applied by force of arms. The results, however, are the same and, already evident, will one day stand out in such violent contrast that the victors of to-day will regret having used the Versailles treaty on Germany instead of turning it on themselves.

Ford says in his wonderful book that the application of this method gives rise to so much of the unexpected, so many new ideas, so much inventive effort, so much creating that no one can tell to what lengths the efficiency of his plant will yet attain. It is the same thing with Germany. To what far limits will the German mind extend if the Versailles treaty is not revised and if for another ten or twenty years that mind is kept in a permanent state of creative frenzy?











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